



# Starved Rock Saplings

Thank you for your interest in Starved Rock State Park. The following Starved Rock Sapling seasonal program is to help engage children and families in nature; at home, in their neighborhood, or at Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks.

Each packet will be posted to the Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Park Facebook page every October, January, April, and July. Packets can also be downloaded from the IDNR website at [www2.illinois.gov/dnr/parks/pages/StarvedRock.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/parks/pages/StarvedRock.aspx) under the Interpretive tab.

Packets will include the following:

## **DISCOVER:**

fun facts and information about the natural world.

## **CONNECT:**

nature activities, storybook suggestions, games, and crafts .

## **EXPLORE:**

ideas for getting outdoors and exploring the natural world in your backyard, neighborhood, or community parks.



**Spring Edition 2021**

**Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks**

[www2.illinois.gov/dnr](http://www2.illinois.gov/dnr)



Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks

**By Lisa Sons, Natural Resource Coordinator**



# DISCOVER

## BIRD IDENTIFICATION FLASHCARDS



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

### Great Horned Owl

- Stands up to 24" tall, one of the largest owls in North America.
- Will sometimes nest in cavities but will also use abandoned nests of other birds such as hawks, crows, etc.
- Call is series of "who, who" calls mainly at dusk, sometimes throughout night.

2

### Eastern Bluebird

- Live in woodland edges, prairies, and meadows.
- Male is more brightly colored than the female.
- Need nesting boxes, or holes in old trees or fence posts.

1

### Baltimore Oriole

- Call is similar to a American Robins "cheerio, cheery up, cheery me" but more garbled.
- Will make a hanging nest in the shape of a bag with opening at top.

4

### Great Blue Heron

- Fish for frogs, fish, snakes, snails, and crayfish in ponds, streams, lakes, and marshes. They use their sharp pointy beak as a skewer.
- Call is similar to a squawk or dog bark.
- Will nest in colonies high in tree tops.

3

### Wood Duck

- Very secretive or shy birds that live in or nearby streams, lakes, and ponds.
- If disturbed or startled will take flight and make a high-pitched whistle like call.
- Nest in cavities of old trees or wood duck boxes.

6

### Sharp Shinned Hawk

- Woodland hawk with a blunt or squared off tail with several dark lines. Coopers hawk has a curved tail.
- Small compact body and wings help it maneuver through trees and branches.

5

### Black Capped Chickadee

- Call is just like its name "chickadee dee dee".
- Make a small compact nest in cavities or nest boxes of moss, lichen, animal hair, and lined with feathers.
- Small white eggs with speckles.

8

### Wild Turkey

- Hens/females will lay eggs in spring virtually anywhere on the ground. Just a scratch in the dirt as a nest.
- Male turkeys or Toms have nothing to do with the babies.
- Turkeys can fly short distances and will roost in trees.

7



# CONNECT

## GAMES AND ACTIVITIES



### Fill The Bill

Volunteer-Led  
ACTIVITY

*What do chopsticks, tweezers, straws, and nutcrackers have in common? They all can be used to simulate different ways that birds eat food.*

#### Learning Objective

Students and festival participants will discover that bird beaks are adapted for specific types of food; describe how adaptations work; and give two examples.

#### Background

Obviously, a hummingbird can't gobble up a mouse, and a hawk can't drink nectar from a flower. Each type of bird has a special beak and tongue adapted for eating a certain type of food. By visiting different stations and trying to use different tools to pick up various types of "food," participants find out which bird beaks are best for tearing, scooping, cracking, or picking.

Species are adapted to the environments where they live. That's partly why protecting habitats is so important: a species is perfectly adapted only to its own habitat's unique types of basic components—food, water, shelter, and space to raise young. Following are eight examples of how the beaks of different species of birds have adapted to different environments and the types of food available in them:

- Hummingbirds have long hollow beaks, which protect their tongues, as they probe flowers and drink nectar.
- Ibises, curlews, godwits, kiwis, woodcocks, and snipe have very long beaks to probe for worms, crustaceans, and other small creatures in mud and shallow water.
- Cardinals, sparrows, grosbeaks, and other finch-like birds have very short, cone-shaped beaks, which are strong enough to break open tough seeds and shells.
- Pelicans have long, flattened, or pouch-like beaks to scoop up fish and other aquatic creatures.
- Flamingos and some ducks (such as Northern Shovelers) have bills that act like strainers to filter tiny plants and animals from the water. (Only some species of ducks are filter feeders).
- Nighthawks, whip-poor-wills, swifts, and swallows have large gaping mouths that act like nets to trap insects as the birds fly through the air.
- Warblers have small, sharp, pointed beaks for picking insects from leaves, bark, and twigs.

#### OVERVIEW

Participants learn about bird feeding adaptations by using tools to simulate eating different foods.

#### CONTENT AREA

Science, Environmental Education

#### PEOPLE POWER

1 adult and 1 student leader

#### SPACE REQUIREMENTS

1 booth with enough room to have 8 "feeding" stations

#### TIME

Preparation: 45 minutes

Activity: 40 minutes

#### MATERIALS

- Copies, Fill the Bill sheet
- Pencils
- 3 eyedroppers or straws
- 4 pairs of chopsticks
- 3 nutcrackers or pliers
- 2 large scoops or slotted spoons
- 3 strainers
- 3 envelopes or small fishnets
- 3 forceps or tweezers
- 3 tongs
- Small log
- Popped corn
- Rice
- Puffed rice
- 2 aquariums or containers
- Fake worms or gummy worms
- Oatmeal
- Stemmed cherries
- A tall, narrow vase (plastic)
- Large saucepan (or container)
- Walnuts or other nuts
- Styrofoam peanuts or dried macaroni
- String

## Fill The Bill Stations

*Note: The \* (asterisk) symbol indicates which tool best fits the food.*

### STATION #1

**W**ater in a tall, narrow vase to represent nectar in a flower. (hummingbirds)

#### TOOLS

eyedropper or straw\*, envelope or small fishnet, large scoop or slotted spoon

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### STATION #2

**L**arge saucepan or other container filled with dry oatmeal, with fake worms (gummy worms work well!) on the bottom to represent worms buried in the mud. (ibises, curlews, godwits, kiwis, woodcocks, and snipes)

#### TOOLS

chopsticks or forceps\*, nutcracker, strainer

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### STATION #3

**W**hole walnuts or other nuts to represent seeds with hard coverings. (sparrows, cardinals, grosbeaks, and other finch-like birds)

#### TOOLS

nutcracker or pliers\*, tongs, chopsticks

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### STATION #4

**S**tyrofoam "peanuts" (or dried macaroni) floating in an aquarium filled with water to represent fish and other aquatic animals. (pelicans)

#### TOOLS

large scoop or slotted spoon\*, eyedropper or straw, chopsticks

### STATION #5

**P**uffed rice in an aquarium filled with water to represent tiny aquatic plants and animals. (flamingos and some ducks, such as the Northern Shoveler)

#### TOOLS

strainer\*, forceps or tweezers, tongs

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### STATION #6

**P**opped popcorn or small marshmallows tossed in the air (by a partner or booth assistant) (which must be caught while in the air) to represent flying insects. (nighthawks, whip-poor-wills and swallows)

#### TOOLS

envelope or small fishnet\*, forceps or tweezers, chopsticks

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### STATION #7

**R**ice spread on a log to represent caterpillars and other insects. (warblers)

#### TOOLS

forceps or tweezers\*, envelope or small fishnet, nutcracker or pliers

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### STATION #8

**C**herries hanging from a string to represent fruit hanging from a branch. (toucans)

#### TOOLS


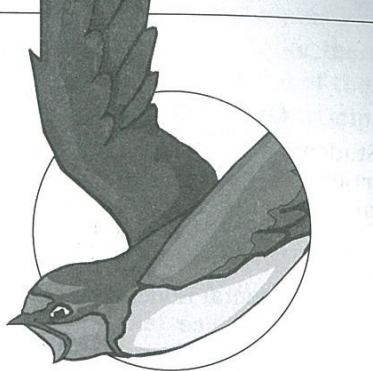
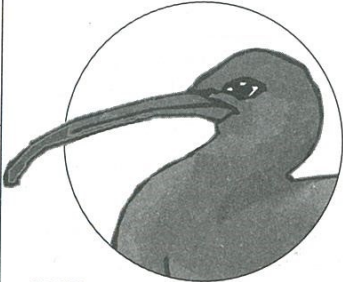
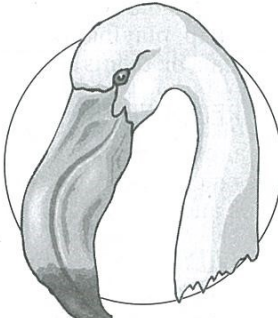
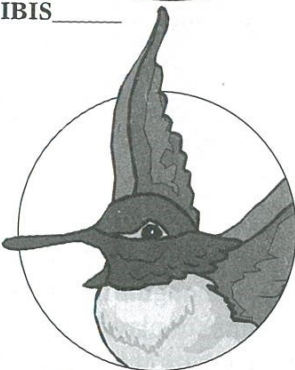
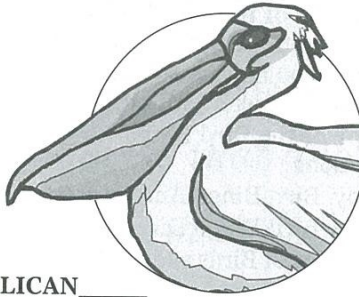
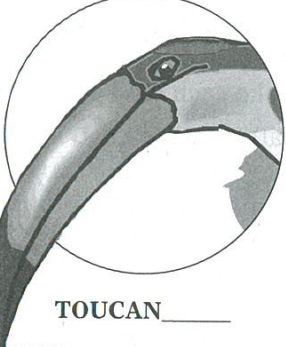

tongs\*, eyedropper or straw, strainer



# CONNECT

## GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

### Fill The Bill Activity

1			
2	NECTAR	CARDINAL _____	SWALLOW _____
3	WORMS IN THE MUD		
4	SEEDS	IBIS _____	FLAMINGO _____
5	FISH AND OTHER WATER ANIMALS		
6	TINY WATER PLANTS AND WATER ANIMALS	HUMMINGBIRD _____	PELICAN _____
7	FLYING INSECTS		
8	CATERPILLARS AND OTHER INSECTS	TOUCAN _____	WARBLER _____
	FRUIT		

# CONNECT

## MAKE AN EDIBLE BIRD NEST SNACK

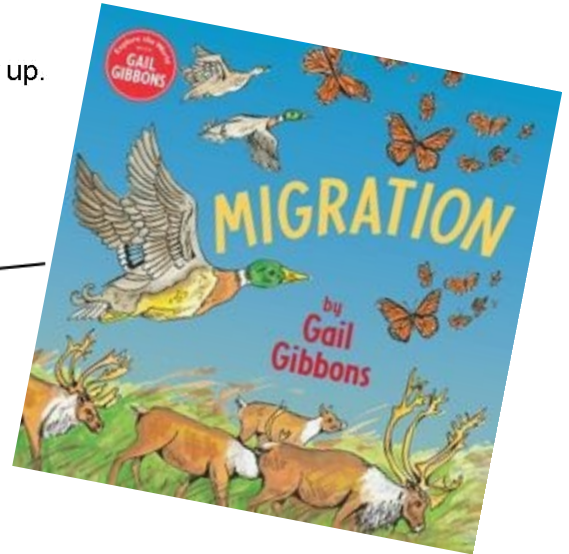
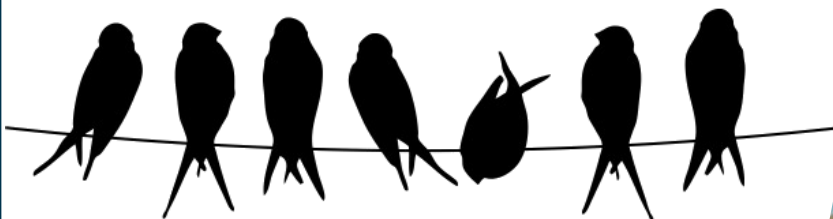
### Edible Bird Nests

#### Ingredients

- 5 large Shredded Wheat biscuits
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup chunky peanut butter
- jelly beans

#### Directions

1. Crush biscuits with your hands in a large bowl.
2. Microwave chocolate chips for one minute and stir until smooth.
3. Stir in peanut butter until combined well.
4. Pour over biscuits and mix well.
5. Place biscuits into a nonstick muffin pan (or coat with nonstick cooking spray) and press firmly. Create a divot in the center of the nest with the back of a spoon.
6. Refrigerate for two hours. Use a knife to pop them
7. out of the pan by sliding it down the side and lifting up.
8. Fill with jelly beans and enjoy!



### NATURE READS!

*Birds* by Carme Lemniscates

*The Little Book of Backyard Bird Sounds* by Andrea Pinnington and Caz Buckingham

*Migration* by Gail Gibbons

*Birds Nests and Eggs* by Mel Boring

### WEBSITES FOR LITTLE NATURALISTS

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com>

<http://gws.ala.org/content/all-about-birds>

<https://www.brightpips.com/lets-learn-about-birds/>

# EXPLORE

## NATURE HIKE

- Explore your backyard, neighborhood, community parks, or Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks with a fun scavenger hunt this fall. Don't forget to "LEAVE NO TRACE" by leaving only footprints and taking only memories when visiting a park.

### Spring Scavenger Hunt

#### What to LISTEN for....



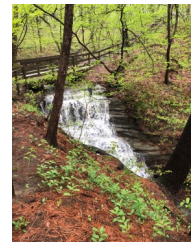
Birds chirping or singing



Wind in the trees



Frogs and Toads calling



Trickling waterfalls

#### What to SMELL.....



Spring wildflowers



sandstone



Campfire



Fallen log or cut tree

#### What to FEEL.....



Tree bark



Tree buds and new leaves



Mud

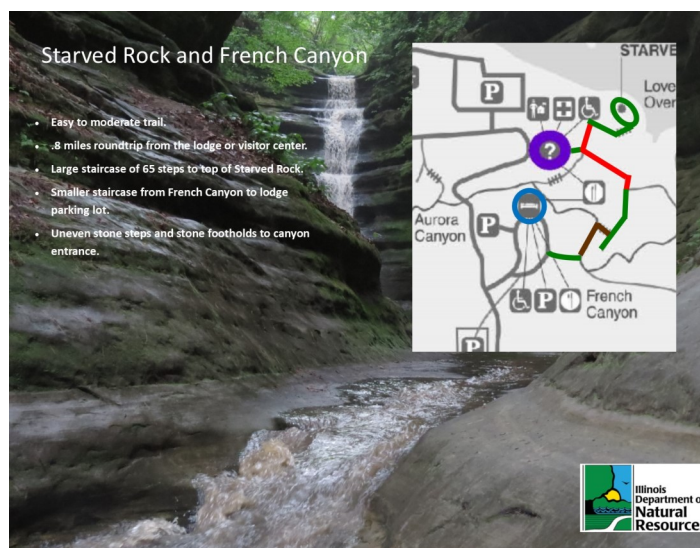


Spring rain puddles



## EXPLORE YOUR STATE PARKS!

Visit [www2.illinois.gov/dnr](http://www2.illinois.gov/dnr) to view state parks by region under the Parks and Recreation tab. What state parks are close to your home? Help your family plan a visit by exploring the parks webpage. What does your local state park have to offer; hiking, biking, horseback riding, camping, fishing, skiing, or boating? Read over the trail maps, trail suggestions, rules and regulations (stay on marked trails), and head out to explore. Here are some recommended trails for families at Starved Rock State Park. Happy Hikers=Happy Trails!



Great trek for families with little ones if you park off of route 178 at the St. Louis parking lot just south of the park's west entrance and hike into St. Louis Canyon.

The most convenient hike at the park starting from the main parking lot by the river and visitor center leading to the park's namesake Starved Rock and French Canyon. French Canyon is not recommended for children under age 5 or anyone in winter when the ground is snow and ice covered.



The eastern canyons of Illinois, Ottawa, and Kaskaskia are great for families due to their length and proximity to parking lots. Just one mile roundtrip hikes into the canyons. Be aware the trails are not paved and you will have a few small creek crossings in spring and early summer.